

Duxbury Clipper

MAY 1950 — MAY 1975
 "May the wind blow fair" for yet another twenty-five!

"I AM THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY, THE BRINGER OF
TIDINGS FROM OTHER FRIENDS.... I RECORD THE GREAT AND THE
SMALL, THE VARIED ACTS OF THE DAYS AND WEEKS THAT
GO TO MAKE UP LIFE I SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THE
COMMON MAN; MY WORDS ARE FITTED TO HIS UNDER-
STANDING.... YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE FIND IN ME
STIMULATION, SOLACE, COMFORT. I AM THE CHRONICLER OF
MAN'S EXISTENCE I AM THE LIVES OF MY READERS.
I AM THE COUNTRY NEWSPAPER."

DEC. 1950
MILESTONE
END OF
WEEK AM.
HAND-
FOLDING
USE OF
GLOSSY
PAPER

CHAP. 14 - "C.M.S.P."
"OUR FOREIGN
CORRESPONDENTS...
THE CLIPPER RECEIVES
MAIL FROM THE MOST
UNEXPECTED
SOURCES!"

"WRITE IT UP IN YOUR OWN WORDS, JOHN, AND PUT IT ON THE FRONT PAGE PLEASE!"

"P.I.O.T.F.P.P."
Published 1960

"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT UP THERE, LOUIS?"
Bobbie Cutler.

"OH, THAT'S JUST AN OLD BURNED OUT LOFT,"
Louis of Sweet Sens

...THE MOTHER
WAS RADIANT IN A
SLIME CHIFFON."

"BY MID-NOV.
OF 1954, DUXBURY
HAD THE BIGGEST
CATCH OF SCALLOPS EVER
KNOWN NORTH OF CAPE COD...
AUTOMOBILE MECHANICS, INSURANCE
AGENTS, LAWYERS, TEACHERS, REALTORS,
AIRLINE PILOTS, FIREMEN, JOINED
THE LOW-TIDE SCALLOP FLEET.
SOME QUIT THEIR JOBS TO EARN
TWICE AS MUCH MONEY DOING
THREE TIMES LESS WORK."
"P.L.O.T.E.P.P.I."

"FINALLY, IT WAS TOO MUCH." AFTER 10½ YEARS, THE CLIPPER MOVED ON TO #2 CITY ROOM, AN 8' x 10' OFFICE (6). BERTH AT SWAG-HARBOR ON THE WHARF

"NOW, JOHN,
— it's
time for
ANOTHER BOOK

LATE 1961 -
NEW OFFICE
EQUIPMENT
NECESSITATED
BY 2ND MILESTONE
CAUSED THE VISION OF A
3RD ANCHORAGE SOON
FRESHLY REFURBISHED
FOR THE CLIPPER 1

LATE APRIL
1950

ORIGINAL

Cancel my
SUBSCRIPTION
Please

"WHY NOT SOMETHING
A LITTLE MORE NAUTICAL...
HOW ABOUT A NAME
LIKE "THE DUXBURY
CLIPPER" ?
TOM PORTER
"R.I.O.T.F.P.P."

TOM PORTER'S
PRESS ②

LATE APRIL
1950

ON ELM STREET

PRESENT
CLIPPER OFFICE
ON CHESTNUT ST

SINCE FALL
1973

from "C.M.S.P."

"OUR READERS WILL
SURELY RECOGNIZE THAT
OUR CONTINUED GROWTH
MAKES IT NECESSARY TO PLAN
FOR FUTURE EXPANSION...
THIS CAN BE DONE ONLY BY
ASKING OUR READERS TO
SHARE PART OF THE COST
OF PUBLISHING THE PAPER"

DUXBURY CLIPPER
Feb. 1963
THIS IS YOUR
LAST FREE
COPY OF
THE CLIPPER!

LATER THE READERS WRITE
"ANYONE WHO THINKS
THE CLIPPER ISN'T
WORTH \$2.50 PER YEAR SHOULDN'T
BE ALLOWED TO READ IT!"
Rev. E. Pugh from "C.M.S.P."

"DEBBIE
AND I
WERE THINKING YOU
OUGHT TO START A
NEWSPAPER, JOHN—
Bobbie Cutler
and Sunday eve

for 10 years!
THE
CUTLER DINING ROOM
ON WASHINGTON ST.

THE CLIPPER WAS
STILL GROWING. EVERY
ONE OF THE 10 ROOMS
IN THE HOUSE HAD
CLIPPER MATERIAL
IN IT. "C.M.S.P."

Published in 1965

THE CREW

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
BARBARA HINES at
COMPUTER

AND ON THE BRIDGE —
"MR. and MRS.
DUXBURY CLIPPER"
John and Bobbie Cutler

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

MANAGING
EDITOR

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
SUZANNE MILLER
at COMPUTER

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
PRISCILLA SANGSTER
at LayOut-Paste-up

SAIL THE

SHIP

NUMBER

The Duxbury Clipper

(Laurie Kaiser of Kingston, who worked on the Clipper this summer as an intern to complete requirements to receive her degree in journalism from Suffolk University, submitted the following thesis for which she received an A.)

Conceived during a bridge game, composed in a dining room and printed in a garage -- the humble beginnings of Duxbury's unique newspaper, the Duxbury Clipper.

Ten years after the Clipper's establishment in 1950, the *New York Times* published a review about the paper, calling it "a sprightly gazetteer of stately social shenanigans, jubilantly led civic enterprises, notes on travel of residents who have flung themselves far into the I-can't-make-head-or-tail-of-the-currency-here-realms of ticketed adventure. But there's more to it than that. If names alone made news, Mr. Cutler suggests the telephone directory would be the most interesting book in the world. The names must appear in some sort of action, as it were. They must tell us who said what at the spirited Town Meeting where neon lighting on a historic shrine was applauded or deplored. They must identify the valiant travelers fighting off hordes of voracious pigeons at St. Mark's...."

The seaside town of Duxbury had no real newspapers in its more than 300-year history. According to an article written in the silver anniversary edition of the Clipper, 2 other papers had existed: *The Duxbury Breeze* and the *Duxbury Pilgrim*, a paper of a South Shore chain "published only to satisfy requirements for printing legal notices." Apparently, someone felt the need for a newspaper in this town and decided to bring up the subject during a bridge game.

"Debbie (Nelson) and I think you ought to start a little newspaper so we'll know about church suppers, PTA meetings, and all that kind of thing," Roberta "Bobbie" Cutler told her husband, John, as he was trying to finesse Debbie's husband, George.

"Well, if John doesn't start a newspaper, someone else will," Bobbie said. "Duxbury is more than 300 years old, after all, and it's a growing community...."

"He started a weekly newspaper when he was a selectee in the Army, and later, when he was with the Navy in Brazil, he was editor of the *South Atlantic News*, and that was a weekly...."

"He could do it. all right. instead of lazing

Among other residents the Cutlers consulted were the retired treasurer of Mt. Holyoke College, Elbert Harvey; realtor, Percy "Mr. Duxbury" Walker; Town Moderator William Wood McCarthy; Robert Stanton Fox, Harriet Borgeson, Sally Dawes Chase; Douglas Pease and Walter Wrye, all of whom comprised the first Clipper advisory board.

Neither Bobbie nor John had background in newspapering. Of the 2, John's background came closer to journalism. "He wasn't a newspaperman per se," his son, David, wrote. "No gnarled editor ever drilled him on the rudiments of a news 'lead,' for instance, and he wasn't at home with the 5 'w's' -- the who, what, when, where, why of journalism. He never chased an ambulance either, and he knew zero about production."

John is a writer, though. He has published 15 books, including 2 about the Clipper. He also had 2 syndicated columns, and he has freelanced. His work has appeared in the *Boston Transcript*, *Boston Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Toronto Star Weekly*, *American Weekly* and *London Daily Mirror*, also in *Argosy*, *The American Magazine*, *Norte* (a South American publication), *Reader's Digest*, *Esquire*, *Pic* magazine and *Collier's*.

Harvard educated, John received 3 degrees, including a PhD. He was an instructor of romance languages at Dartmouth and at Boston University.

While in the Navy during World War II, John was deployed to Brazil, where he served as fleet historian for Fleet Air Wing Sixteen. During this time he also edited the *South Atlantic News* and gathered data on Vice Admiral Jonas Ingram, Commander of the Fourth Fleet, for an article that appeared in *Liberty* magazine under the title, "Boss of the Atlantic." When he entered the Navy, he already had 2 syndicated columns and had written features for the *Boston Sunday Post*.

During his final year of military service, spent in Washington, D.C., John ghosted articles and speeches for Navy officials, including Admirals Aubrey Fitch, Marc Mitscher and Ernest King and for Artemus Gates, undersecretary of the Navy, and John Sullivan, assistant secretary of the Navy.

He also wrote *A History of Antisubmarine Warfare in the South Atlantic*, and "as a farewell assignment," he said, a brief (100-page) history, *Naval Aviation in the War Against Japan*, on which he collaborated with Hannibal Coons. Released in 1945 from active duty, which interrupted his teaching at Dartmouth, John became a lecturer at Boston University. That is what he was doing when he launched the Clipper.

a resort area. The lead read, "Duxbury was never so united."

"More than 300 residents crowded into the Gardner Auditorium in the State House last Thursday to voice their opposition to the proposed bill that would make Duxbury a public resort area. Town Moderator William Wood McCarthy, chairman of the protest committee, presented the legislative committee on harbors and public lands a petition signed by 1165 Duxbury residents. The forceful and sometimes brilliant arguments against the taking of Duxbury Beach which were made by the speakers impressed the legislative committee." The story was more than 23 inches long in 8-point type.

Anchoring the left side of the front page was "Unitarian Conference Draws 250 Delegates," a story about the spring conference of the Unitarian Churches of Plymouth County held in Duxbury. Under that story was a single-column, 2-inch story with an easily missed 10-point headline: Duxbury's Population Close To 3,000 Census Shows.

Four ads appeared at the bottom of the page, and underneath the Walk-over Shoe Store ad was a one-column by 2-inch boxed notice: 1950 Town Tax Rate Jumps to \$38.

But, Bobbie notes, she found no copy of the Clipper in the post office wastebasket that May 11.

The first Clipper office was on Washington St. -- at the Cutlers' home. "My parents tried to confine the Clipper to the dining room," David wrote. "It was the office for more than 10 years. But there were these lapses and somehow copy seemed to scatter its way through the house. The bookcase was among the worst villains...."

Tom Porter printed the paper for approximately 7 months, until he retired. The Cutlers then had the Clipper printed at the Observer-Press plant in So. Braintree. David described the plant as "a seedy, dank building filled with fun people." After 11 years with the Observer-Press, the Cutlers switched from letterpress to offset printing, moving to the South Shore Publishing Co. in No. Scituate. The change to offset with camera-ready copy has been described as "6 weeks of hell." The switch required the purchase of Justowriters, sophisticated typewriters that automatically justify copy into columns, and also required layout or paste-up work by the staff.

At about the same time in 1961, the Clipper moved out of the dining room and into a cubicle in Snug Harbor. "To answer the phone," John says, "we'd have to shut the machines (Justowriters) off."

The Clipper moved several times more until it

Eighteen days later, on May 11, 1950, the first issue of the **Duxbury Clipper** appeared gratis in the mailboxes of Duxbury residents. The population of Duxbury in 1950 was almost 3,000. The **Clipper** circulated to about 1,200 households. The **Clipper** remained a free publication for Duxbury residents for nearly 13 years.

Before embarking on the perilous voyage of publishing a weekly newspaper, the Cutlers consulted several townspeople. John asked his neighbor, Arthur "Beanie" Beane, for his opinion on the idea. "You're out of your mind," he said. But he introduced John to Tom Porter, a man over 70, who operated the Print Shop in a garage behind his house. "Porter introduced my father to the business of composing and production," John's son, David, who now owns 6 So. Shore weeklies, wrote later in the silver anniversary edition of the **Clipper**. "He had a linotype machine...and, yes, he could print a newspaper." Tom also gave the **Clipper** its name. He suggested the name to John, and, after John accepted it, informed him that the name might have been used by a Unitarian minister in town who had seriously been contemplating publishing a weekly. Had the Cutlers not intercepted, he might have published a **Duxbury Clipper**. If the name "Duxbury Clipper" was not mentioned or was rejected, what is now known as the **Clipper** could have been known as the "Alden Journal" or the "Standish Journal" --names of which John had thought.

a Cornell professor who had won a Nobel Prize in biochemistry, and Cid Ricketts Sumner, a novelist, graduated from Cornell, where she was campus queen. "We went to her reunion," John recalls, "and 5 of her classmates came up to me and said the same damned thing: she was not only the most beautiful girl in her class, but the most beautiful girl on campus."

Her son, David, wrote, "Well, she could act and sing and garden and cook...and do a lot of other things, but a newswoman she wasn't. Never saw a city room, never met a deadline, never chased an ambulance. She was versatile, though, and that proved to be valuable."

She must have been some salesman, too. She was in charge of advertising when the **Clipper** began, and she sold enough ads to keep the **Clipper** afloat. "As it turned out," David wrote, "that first issue included a respectable number of ads. Not the 50% plus that publishers expect today, but respectable enough to boo the prophets of doom."

Bobbie was the mother of 4 when the **Clipper** began and later, a mother of 5.

"Although the first edition did not violate all the best traditions of journalism, it strove mightily in that direction," John later wrote. The first edition consisted of 6 pages of newsprint on glossy paper. The top story, "Duxbury Stand At Hearing Impresses Legislative Committee," flushed right, was a comprehensive description of the proceedings at a hearing on a proposed bill that would make Duxbury

Clipper had several printers after So. Shore Publishing: Lujan Printing in Osterville, Saltus Press in Worcester and Memorial Press in Plymouth. Now the **Clipper** is printed at 11 So. Station St.

Early contributors to the **Clipper** included Grace Anthony, who wrote the "Homespun Yarns" column; Ollie Rodman, who wrote "Angler's Corner"; Margaret Metcalf, owner of Westwinds Bookshop, who wrote a column called "Turn of a Bookworm"; Betty Oldham, who wrote the "Helpful Harriet" and the "Bird Station" columns; Stuart Huckins, who wrote a "Nature's Way" column; Henry Cragin Walker, who wrote about his long walks on the beach in a column called "Through a Looking Glass"; and Herman Smith, who compiled a "Favorite Recipes" column.

Other contributors included former society editor for the Boston *Globe* and Boston *Herald American*, Alison Arnold; novelist Cid Ricketts Sumner, syndicated columnist, Neal O'Hara of the defunct Boston *Traveler* and columnist George Frazier.

The Cutlers were the **Clipper** staff for the first 10 years. They hired Jo Ann Collins, Peggy Dunn and Mary Ann Fenton as the first editorial assistants.

The **Clipper** switched to paid circulation in February 1963, as a result of Bobbie's coaxing John. He was afraid the paper would not sell. "The **Clipper** subscription drive was an enormous success right from the start," David wrote. "And the start was William Wood McCarthy, who upon getting his **Clipper** at the Snug Harbor Post Office, and reading that

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